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NEWS RELEASE

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FORMER BARTON COUNTY BASKETBALL COACH PLEADS GUILTY

WICHITA, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Ryan Wolf**, 33, Martinsville, Indiana, entered a guilty plea on December 12, 2005, before U.S. District Judge Wesley E. Brown to **one count of misapplication of student assistance; two counts of theft of federal funds; and one count of mail fraud.**

Wolf admitted that he was employed as the men's assistant or head basketball coach/instructor at Barton County Community College in Great Bend, Kansas, from May of 1998 through 2003. His duties included coaching the men's basketball team, teaching courses, serving as an academic advisor to student athletes and supervision of student athletes participating in the campus and federal work study programs. Wolf admitted that on several occasions, he participated and assisted student athletes with the completion of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms. More than once, he filled out and caused the completion of the FAFSAs with false information. Specifically, the FAFSAs were completed to state that a certain student athlete would have a high school diploma or GED by the time he enrolled at BCCC, when Wolf knew this was not true. Wolf knew that these specific students would not be eligible for federal financial aid if the form stated that the students would not have their high school diploma or GED by the time of their enrollment. Wolf further admitted that he did not complete the "preparer" portion of the FAFSAs on these occasions as required.

Wolf admitted that on or about September 6, 1999, Carlton Baker was an 18 year old resident of Indiana. Mr. Baker did not graduate from high school or obtain a GED certificate prior to attending BCCC. Furthermore, Mr. Baker has not completed home schooling or passed a DOE approved ability to benefit test. Wolf prepared or caused the preparation of a FAFSA form for Mr. Baker which represented that Mr. Baker would have a high school diploma or GED before he enrolled at BCCC. Wolf knew that this was false. Based upon this

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false statement, between July 5, 2000, and June 30, 2001, Mr. Baker received approximately \$6,800.00 in Pell Grants and federally guaranteed subsidized student loans.

BCCC also had a campus work study program which was subsidized by funds from sources other than the federal government. This program allowed BCCC to provide compensation to qualified students that BCCC employed under its campus work study program. It was a requirement of BCCC that all payments to qualified students were to be made for work actually performed by the students, and proper documentation was to be maintained for all such work and compensation.

Wolf was authorized by BCCC to designate student athletes for employment under the Federal Work Study Program and the campus work study program. It was part of the Wolf's duties and responsibilities to supervise the work of these student athletes and to maintain proper documentation of the work they performed. This documentation included time sheets that were prepared to reflect the date and hours worked by the student athlete. These time sheets were to be completed honestly and signed by the appropriate student athlete and the appropriate supervisor, who in many instances was Wolf. Wolf did not require these student athletes to work as represented on the time sheets. Despite the failure of these student athletes to perform work under the Federal Work Study Program and the campus work study program, Wolf knowingly and willfully, prepared and submitted (or approved the preparation and submission) of time sheets which falsely represented that student athletes performed work as part of these programs and, as such, were entitled to be paid. Wolf admitted that from January 1, 1999, through 2003, \$71,981.75 in campus work study program funds were misapplied, embezzled, obtained by fraud and converted without authority. Wolf further admitted that during this same time, \$17,633.70 in Federal Work Study Program funds were misapplied, embezzled, obtained by fraud and converted without authority to the use of another.

Wolf admitted that he participated in a scheme involving academic fraud at BCCC. Wolf admitted that on numerous occasions he completed or facilitated the completion of academic work on behalf of student/athletes. Wolf admitted that he paid another to take a GED test offered at Warrent Central High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, in the name of Carlton Baker. This individual passed the GED test, in the name of Carlton Baker. The GED certificate issued in the name of Carlton Baker was provided to BCCC on or about August 13, 2001, and became part of Mr. Baker's academic file. With the completion of this requirement, Mr. Baker was eligible to earn and did obtain an associate degree from BCCC. Mr. Baker's official transcript was mailed from BCCC to San Jose State University on June 26, 2001, and August 13, 2001. Based upon this information, San Jose State University believed that Mr. Baker was eligible to enroll at San Jose State University and to play NCAA Division I basketball, when in fact he was not eligible to play basketball. This information also had the effect of representing that Mr. Baker was eligible to receive federal student assistance, when in fact he was not. By participating and assisting others in the completion of this scheme to defraud, Wolf deprived the San Jose State University and BCCC of the good and honest services of Mr. Baker.

Wolf faces a maximum of five years in federal prison, without parole, for misapplication of student assistance; a maximum of ten years on each count of theft of federal funds; and a maximum of twenty years for mail fraud. Sentencing is set for February 27, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. Wolf remains on bond pending sentencing.

Melgren commended the excellent work of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, in this investigation.